

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-10

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FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5019

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BELFAST

CONFIDENTIAL DUBLIN 1272

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PBOR, EI

SUBJ: CONCERN OVER HEATH "INTEGRATION" THREAT

1. ON SEP 19, SECOND DAY AFTER HEATH/COSGRAVE MEETING, MEDIA ATTENTION HAS BEEN DIVERTED TO SPECULATION OVER HEATH'S INTENTIONS IN THREATENING FULL INTEGRATION OF NI IF NEW ASSEMBLY CANNOT FUNCTION (DUBLIN 1259, PARA 7). EDITORIAL WRITERS ARE INCLINED TO LET HEATH REMARK PASS AS A TACTIC GONE WRONG, BUT THEY OBVIOUSLY HOPE IT WAS NOT A FREUDIAN SLIP. TWO OF HIS STATEMENTS ON SUBJECT HAVE BEEN CARRIED REPEATEDLY BY LOCAL TV AND OTHER MEDIA, AND NO ONE HERE IS READING STATEMENT AS MERE CASUAL ERROR. MOST COMMENTATORS ARE WILLING ACCEPT, HOWEVER, THAT HEATH MIGHT HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTING ONCE AGAIN TO VENT HIS IRRITATION AT LOYALIST OBSTRUCTIONS. FACT THAT INTIAL THREAT WAS GIVEN TO NI BROADCAST IS ADVANCED AS EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF THIS THEORY.

2. HEATH'S SPEECH NIGHT OF SEPT 18 IS GENERALLY DESCRIBED AS AN ATTEMPT TO BACK AWAY FROM "INTEGRATION" THREAT WITHOUT SPECIFICALLY ADMITTING BLUNDER. THERE

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IS STILL CLAMOR FOR FULL DISAVOWEL, HOWEVER. REPORTERS ALL AGREE THAT HEATH'S COMMENT IS ASSISTING

LOYALIST EXTREMISTS IN OBSTRUCTING WORK OF ASSEMBLY.

3. BRITISH DIPLOMAT TOLD US, IN STRICT CONFIDENCE, THAT HEATH DID MENTION "INTEGRATION" POSSIBILITY TO PM COSGRAVE DURING TALKS. THERE WAS NO REACTION WHATEVER FROM COSGRAVE OR FONOFF PERMSEC HUGH MCCANN, WHO ALSO PRESENT. (IF IRISH UNDERSTOOD HEATH, WE SUPPOSE THAT ONLY CHOICES WERE TO IGNORE REMARK OR REPLY IN VERY HEATED TERMS.) BRITISH COLLEAGUE THEN PLAYED DOWN HEATH'S COMMENT, SAYING THAT IT WAS SIMPLY A DESCRIPTION OF FACT THAT MIGHT EXIST IF NI ASSEMBLY FAILED. THIS SEEMED MOST UNCONVINCING EXPLANATION, AND SOURCE HIMSELF WAS CLEARLY NOT ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT HEATH'S REMARK. WE GATHER THIS WAS PART OF ATTEMPT TO BACK AWAY FROM TROUBLESOME STATEMENT.

4. COMMENT: HEATH REMARK COMPLICATES ANGLO-IRISH PROGRESS ON LINES LAID OUT IN GREEN AND WHITE PAPERS. IN DUBLIN, PROBLEM COULD BE OVERCOME, THOUGH SOME ADDITIONAL EXPLAINING WOULD HELP.

5. BELFAST 142 REPORTS INTERESTING PREDICTION MADE BY STRATTON MILLS SEPT 15. IF MILLS' LINE IS CORRECT, HEATH'S REMARK COULD BE EVIDENCE THAT HE IS DISGUSTED WITH IRISH POLITICIANS AND INCLINED "TAKE RIGHT ANGLE TURN" IN POLICY. IF THIS WERE THE CASE, HOWEVER, HEATH WOULD CERTAINLY BE CATCHING DUBLIN BY SURPRISE. GOI HAS DEVOTED VAST EFFORT (DUBLIN 1216) TO WORK ALONG LINES OF EXISTING BRITISH POLICY. MOORE

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